

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Red Capped Robins in Kelmscott –**  
On 14 May 1998 I saw a pair (male and female) of Red-capped Robins (*Petroica goodenovii*) at the rear of Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital, close to Salter road, Kelmscott. They were in a patch of open woodland dominated by scarp wandoo (*Eucalyptus laeliae*) that had been burnt about six months previously. The weather that day was fine and mild with bright sunshine, and I saw them at about 1 p.m.

The birds were surprisingly close to a road and residential properties, although this area is the tail end of an extensive tract of more or less contiguous bush that stretches down from the Darling Scarp. The observation may be related to another one from about two years ago when I saw a single male Red-capped Robin about 2 kilometres due east, on the high scarp, in a semi-clared area near Canns Road, close to the TV transmission tower.

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**“Teaching” or “teasing”?—indirect feeding of food-begging birds by an adult butcherbird and sittella –** On 12 September 1997, WED heard the harsh, repetitive, food-begging call of an adult Grey Butcherbird (*Cracticus torquatus*). The male was nearby, and had in his beak a 3 cm insect. The female joined the male and continued to utter the food-begging calls while fluttering her wings in a fashion typical of a food-begging young bird. The

male, perched about 0.7 m above the begging female, wedged the food item in the fork of a small branch, and then flew off. The female climbed to the fork and removed the cached food and ate it. On 18 September WED watched the same pair again involved in courship feeding. On this occasion the male cached a small lizard in the frayed end of a tree-stump about 10m from a shrub where the female was food-begging. The male joined the female, but the female did not go to the lizard. After a few seconds the male returned to the stump, retrieved the lizard and flew over to another shrub where he was joined by the female. The male then directly fed the lizard to the begging female. Possibly, the male originally stashed the lizard for the female to retrieve, and only retrieved it himself after she failed to do so.

On 13 September 1997 HFR watched three adult Black-headed Sittellas (*Daphoenositta pileata*) (two males and a female) feeding four fledglings. One of the males, carrying insects in his beak, approached a fledgling and offered the food, then pulled it away and cached it in rough bark about 20 cm from the fledgling. The young bird aggressively displaced the adult and removed and ate the stashed food.

Assuming that the male butcherbird responded to the female food-begging in the same way that it would to a food-begging young bird, the food-caching by the butcherbird and sittella are analogous. Is it possible that these were instances of

"teaching" in which adult birds stimulated a search and capture response in the food-begging birds? Butcherbirds may be predisposed towards this behaviour because of their habit of caching food, but we have never observed food caching by sittellas. The sample size is too small to draw any firm conclusions, but the observations were suggestive.

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Two additional species of butterfly recorded from Rottneest Island - About 1430 hrs on 4 November 1998, in the Botanic Golf Course, Rottneest Island, I observed a small lycaenid butterfly feeding, wings closed, from the flowers of chenille honey-myrtle (*Melaleuca huegelii*). Through my binoculars I could see the quite plain undersides of the wings, the forewing coppery in colour, the hind wing more greyish, with two small black spots near the tornus. I was in no doubt that this was the Two-spotted Line-blue (*Nacaduba biocellata*), a species I know well. Although I had a good

look only at this one specimen, further small lycaenid butterflies that I saw flying round this and other shrubs of chenille honey-myrtle may have been the same species.

About 1500 hrs on the same day, on Parker Point Road near McCallum Avenue, I saw two specimens of another species of butterfly well known to me, the Meadow Argus (*Junonia villida*). As they settled on the ground or on the flowers of peppermints (*Agonis flexuosa*) planted by the roadside, I gained a good look at their outspread wings, displaying their distinctive eye-spots, and was in no doubt as to their identity.

Neither of these butterflies is included in the fourteen species previously recorded for Rottneest Island, although both are known from Garden Island [A.A.E. WILLIAMS. 1997. The butterflies (Lepidoptera) of Garden and Rottneest Islands, Western Australia. *Australian Entomologist* 24: 27-34]. My records increase the number of butterfly species recorded on Rottneest Island to sixteen.

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